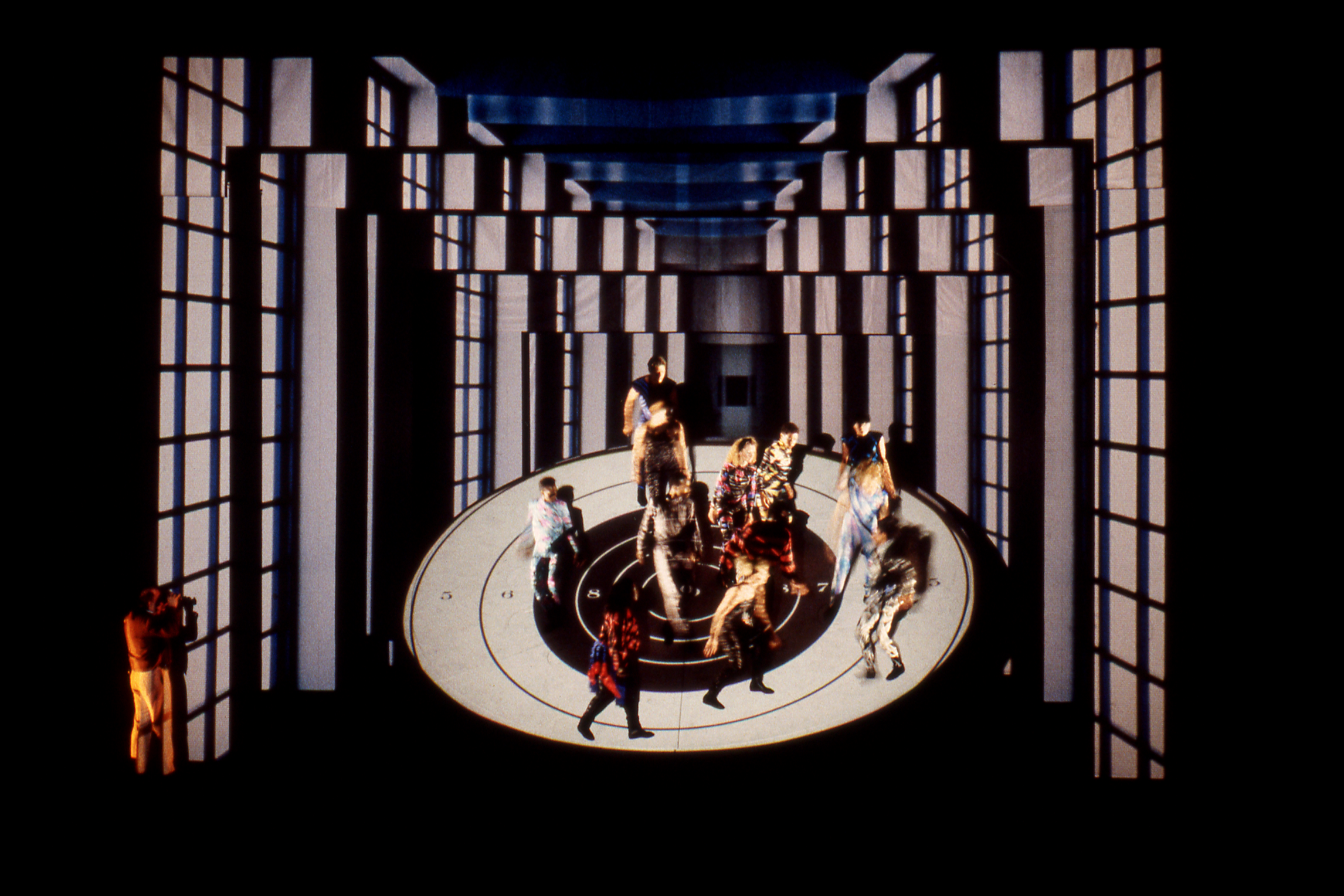

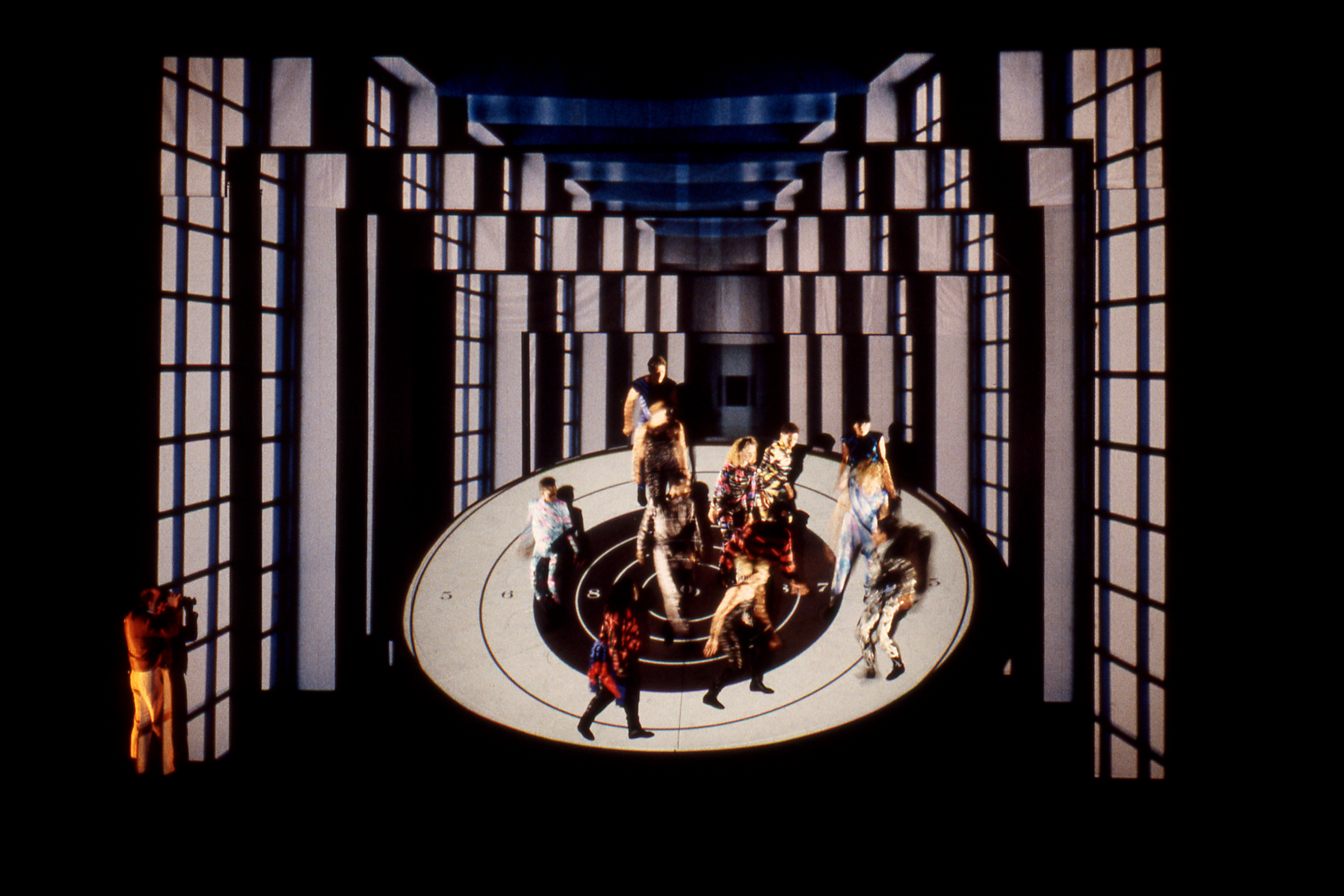

Actual Sho
Target

Reflections

Jeffrey Hunt
October 6 2025

This next slide appears to follow directly in sequence from the earlier Chess Pieces image from Actual Sho. It's part of what I recall as a larger series—perhaps half a dozen or more frames—that captured a single choreographed rotation within the performance.

Sean Kilcoyne remains visible at the lower left, still observing through his binoculars, illuminated by that same extraordinary amber light. It came from the fragment of antique gel salvaged years earlier from the University of Washington Drama Department dustbin—the same piece that survived through Edifice Next and somehow resurfaced here.

At this point in the sequence, the group of performers has gathered on the circular platform at center stage. I believe the disc was locked in place at this moment—but just you wait. The illusion of motion is already powerful.

From this angle, the interplay of color and texture in the costumes—designed by Ariel Jones and Sue Fox—becomes more clearly visible. The mix was astonishing: fabrics that shimmered and fractured the light, set against the sharply defined projection grid of the architectural background. The entire composition—the moving bodies, the static geometry, and the soft amber presence of Sean at the periphery—embodies the layered, cinematic precision that made Actual Sho so unique.

Actual Sho
Target

Notes
Edward Sisson
October 5 2025

Wow, wow, wow, wow!! Thanks so much for this! You are quite correct about the "locked in place" - there was an angular "chock" that backstage folks slid - or jammed - into place against the now-tilted-up flat bottom of the cone, once performers on the cone (it took four people) had gathered on the front edge to make the cone tilt down full. Then the backstage folks would slide the chock into place. And then performers could go anywhere on the surface and the cone would not rock. This made the "tilted ramp" of the prior show, Rare Area. Getting this to work required, first, George choreographing the performers to get them all along the front edge to make the cone tilt down, and then some kind of headset cue-calling to the backstage to jam in the chock - and then I presume some signal-back, that the chock was in place; and then the performers could get some signal to start moving again - and the whole process repeated later in the sequence, to enable the chock to be pulled back out. No wonder that every time that show went up, and I was watching from my usual post standing behind the last row orchestra, I felt like the engineers in the control room at Cape Kennedy watching another Saturn V moon shot - will everything that has to go right, go right? Sliding that chock into place - and later pulling it out again - was the most dangerous action in the entire show. I was told - but was not a witness - that to emphasize this to the crew, in our rehearsal hall on Francisco St., four performers went to the edge to tilt the cone down, and then someone tossed a thawed chicken from the grocery store under the flat bottom of the cone (which was now raised up) and then told the four performers to jump off onto the stage. The cone immediately sharply rocked back, and squashed the chicken. "That's your hand" the crew was then told. Again I add, as to this image, that the line-breaks in the surrounding projection were the result of the main front-projection image hitting large white vinyl flat drapes, which were progressively further and further back from the proscenium, and cut progressively to have smaller and smaller apertures. This is what made the image of depth - and I do not say "illusion" of depth because this was real spacial depth. This photo was probably taken in our studio, where we did not have a fly tower - but in performance, each vinyl sheet would be hung from a long pipe engaged to a fly-tower system, so that we could fly them up and down. And all of this inspired by the brilliance and imagination of George Coates. All thanks to George! Now if we could just get a list of the names of each person on the cone ....

Actual Sho
Target

Notes
Edward Sisson
October 5 2025

I believe that is Sterling Cotton striding at dead center. If we can get that at highest resolution, we could make a great solo portrait out of it, to share with his family (I recall he died some years ago).

Notes
Jeffrey Hunt
October 5 2025

Ed, thanks so much for your comments — really valuable! I'm going to add all of this to the entry on the IA when I can get to it; it may take a couple of days. I'll also upload the TIFF to this entry so you can download it directly from there. I think it'll be fairly easy to find once you're on the page.

(Ed, these were shot on 35mm tungsten-balanced 160 ASA film under very low stage lighting. I was a long way from the stage, so depth of field wasn't the main issue — the lens was opened fully just to pull in enough light for any workable exposure. Even at that, the lighting was so dim that the film was operating right at its sensitivity limit. Under those conditions, fine detail simply can't resolve cleanly, even on perfectly still subjects.

You can see that with Sean on the left — he's standing still and somewhat sharper than the others, but even his image would never appear truly crisp at this light level. The softness comes from the film's grain structure and exposure limits, not from motion or the scan itself. The 2400-dpi scan already captures everything the emulsion was capable of recording – or very close to it.)